

government, but will we leave our troops in Iraq to protect them? We know oil has had a lot to do with this war, but will we let this President get away with attempting to privatize Iraq's oil wealth in the name of reconciliation?

We can still change course. We can deny the administration funds to continue the war. We can bring our troops home. We can stabilize Iraq with an international security force once we end the occupation. That is exactly what H.R. 1234 is about, and it is time that we started to look for alternatives which reflect this Nation's highest aspirations.

RUSSIA

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, anyone who was alive at the time will always remember the collapse of the Berlin Wall.

With the Soviet bloc crumbling, the western world rejoiced as freedom spread to populations once thought hopelessly in the grip of Communist oppressors. There was reason to believe that the Soviets' brutal form of tyranny was over forever.

Unfortunately, recent actions seem to be giving new life to old Communist ghosts. Police squads crushing the Kremlin's dissenters, advocates of freedom and transparency silenced, cultural figures detained.

Mr. Speaker, the recent backsliding in Russia should be cause for alarm for all freedom loving people. As the Kremlin's power expands, freedom for the Russian people shrinks. This was wrong during the Cold War and it is wrong now.

It is time that the free nations of the world take a stand against this trend and start demanding more from Mr. Putin and Russia's leaders.

ARMY SPECIALIST ERVIN CARADINE, JR.

(Mr. COHEN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. COHEN. Mr. Speaker, I want to talk about a gentleman who was Army Specialist Ervin Caradine, Jr.

Mr. Caradine would have been 36 years old today if he had lived. He was from my hometown of Memphis, Tennessee where we have lost nine veterans. He joined the Army to provide a better life for his family. He had graduated from Fairley High School and worked his way up to being a manager at the Steak-Out Restaurant in Memphis. He had a wife and he had four children.

Three years ago to this day, Army Specialist Ervin Caradine, Jr., died. He was in a convoy in Baghdad that was hit by an IED 3 years ago. Three days before his death, he called his wife and

she said there was a change in his voice. He said, "It's getting worse over here, it's not getting better."

Since then, nearly 3,000 more soldiers have died. Army Specialist Ervin Caradine, Jr., said something 3 years and 3 days ago that is still true: It's getting worse over here, it's not better. Let's not have more deaths.

CONTINUE TO TAKE THE FIELD

(Mr. SHIMKUS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SHIMKUS. Mr. Speaker, imagine my beloved St. Louis Cardinals were playing the much-despised Chicago Cubs. The Cardinals are up by five, finishing the top of the ninth. Is this a cause for celebration? Is this a cause for victory? No.

Unbelievable as it may seem, the Cubbies score five runs in the bottom of the ninth to throw the game into extra innings. There, the score remains until 1 a.m., five innings later. However, at the top of the 15th, the Cardinals fail to field a batter. The entire team has left the stadium. It seems that they are more worried about next day's 1 p.m. game at home than finishing the game at hand.

Who wins? We know, it's the team that stays on the field. Arbitrary deadlines and a date certain accept defeat before the conclusion of the contest. It is in our national security interest to continue to take the field and support a moderate Arab state. Leaving prior assures a loss for us and a victory for our opponents, which will lead to another extremist Islamic state.

"THE PRESIDENT CANNOT VETO REALITY"

(Mr. DOGGETT asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. DOGGETT. Mr. Speaker, the President can veto our plan for a safe and orderly phased redeployment from Iraq, but he cannot veto reality. Our troops are coming home, it's just a question of how much blood and money will be spent before they do.

If the President had listened to the generals, we would never have invaded Iraq in the first place. Each day of this unnecessary tragedy demonstrates the wisdom of General Schwarzkopf's warning that we would become "like [a] dinosaur in a tar pit."

Had he listened to the generals, the President would have deployed enough troops to get the job done. But instead, he rejected the advice of General Shinseki, and allowed the violence to spiral, and unguarded weapon heaps became IEDs.

If the President had listened to the generals, he would now be redeploying our troops instead of sending more, inadequately protected, for longer, repeat tours of duty.

Had the President listened to the generals, our veterans would be getting

the quality care that they have earned and they deserve.

But in this Administration, generals who disagree with the President earn a new title: Retired.

CONYERS-KIRK HATE CRIMES LEGISLATION

(Mr. KIRK asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. KIRK. Mr. Speaker, I rise in support of the Conyers-Kirk Local Law Enforcement Hate Crimes Prevention Act. We know that a hate crime can ignite group-on-group violence that can completely overwhelm a small suburban police department.

In 2005, the FBI recorded 7,000 hate crimes in our country, 168 in the State of Illinois, and two in my congressional district, one in Wheeling and one in Palatine.

For us, we remember a tragic night in 1999 when Benjamin Smith, a member of a white supremacist group, gunned down the Northwestern University basketball coach in front of two kids. Why? Because he was black. Smith then continued his hunting spree, shooting Orthodox Jews coming home from synagogue, and spraying bullets at an Asian couple driving home in Northbrook.

These were hate crimes, crimes designed to tear a community apart, crimes designed to commit and isolate and stigmatize others because of the color of their skin or the religion they practice.

I urge my colleagues to back the Hate Crimes bill.

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FOUR YEARS AGO IT WAS MISSION ACCOMPLISHED BUT NOW IT'S THE NEVER-ENDING MISSION

(Mr. SARBANES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SARBANES. Mr. Speaker, yesterday Congress sent the President an emergency supplemental bill that provides our soldiers and our veterans everything the President asked for and more. It was a bill supported by the American people, this Congress and military experts who believe it is time to change the course of the war in Iraq. The President's response? A veto.

The President's action last night shows not only his stubbornness and his inability to work with others, it also demonstrates that he simply refuses to change the status quo.

The President refuses to give our troops, this Congress, or the American people any timelines as to when this war will end or under what conditions he would finally bring our troops home.

Mr. Speaker, the President says that things are getting better in Iraq, but that's simply not true. Last month was